



Orange County Schools

A Parent Guide to the K-5 Report Card

1. Why is Orange County Schools changing its Report Card?

There are several reasons Orange County Schools revised its Report Card.

- o The North Carolina Standard Course of Study (SCOS) identifies proficiency standards.
- o The revisions link classroom achievement with grade and End of Grade (EOG) proficiency standards based on a growth model for each individual student.
- o The revisions ensure consistent language about performance across the district.
- o The revised Report Card provides parents with more in-depth information about how their child is performing in reading, writing, and mathematics.
- o The revisions enable teachers to more effectively describe students' strengths and/or needs.
- o The revisions enable teachers to measure student progress based on their current knowledge and understanding of research-based practices to teach reader's workshop, writer's workshop, and language/word study.

2. Who recommended the changes?

In an effort to ensure that Orange County Schools was reporting student progress consistently across the district, the K-5 Principals recommended that the Report Card be revised to reflect the NC Standard Course of Study. Three separate committees worked on revisions to the Report Card. One was a parent committee, another was comprised of principals, associate principals, and teacher representatives, and one was comprised of teachers who addressed mathematics only.

3. What will change?

There will be two distinct changes:

- The kindergarten, first, and second grade Report Cards will be replaced by a K-2 grade span Report Card. The current 3-5 Report Card already represents the grade span. Because reading and writing skills are process skills that apply in grades K-12, a grade-span reporting system enables teachers to describe student progress. However, since math skills are linear and progress from one to the next, the math descriptors will be grade specific for K-5.
- Numerical and letter grades will no longer be used to describe student performance; instead, we will use performance levels—much like those already used in K-2 or those used on the End of Grade tests in grades 3-5—to describe student progress in meeting state performance and proficiency standards.

4. What are the benefits of the changes?

- Parents will receive more in-depth information about how their child is performing on each of the five essential reading elements, on each of the two writing processes, and on each of the five mathematics strands. Multiple descriptors under each major heading will permit parents to see where their child is either having successes or difficulties.
- The performance proficiency levels will more closely match how teachers teach writing and reading. Because the state uses performance rubrics* to determine if students are "proficient" it is inconsistent to use letter or number grades to show proficiency. *A rubric is a scoring guide that describes several levels of understanding or competency for a particular skill or concept.
- Performance proficiency levels provide a more objective way to measure the adequacy of students' achievement and performance with respect to clear learning standards; therefore, reporting the proficiency level gives parents a way to compare their child's performance against state benchmarks.

5. How will student progress/performance be reported now?

Orange County Schools will use Levels of Performance to report progress. These are:

Level 4: Consistently meets grade-level proficiency expectations at the highest performance levels.

- o Employs higher level thinking skills to analyze, synthesize, and justify concepts
- o Applies knowledge of known to solve unknown or to make applications to other disciplines or to other literary works
- o Consistently extends and elaborates
- o Works independently most of the time to complete tasks accurately

Level 3: Consistently meets grade-level proficiency expectations.

- o Shows conceptual understanding of content
- o Applies knowledge of concepts and learning strategies to new content/discipline to construct meaning
- o Completes most tasks accurately
- o Requires minimal teacher guidance/direction/supervision to complete work

Level 2: Inconsistently meets grade-level proficiency expectations.

- o Shows some evidence of conceptual understanding of content
- o Has difficulty applying strategies or completing tasks in unfamiliar situations or to new content
- o Requires teacher guidance/direction/supervision frequently
- o Often needs additional time/opportunities /explanations

Level 1. Does not or rarely meets grade-level proficiency expectations.

- o Shows no/limited evidence of conceptual understanding of content
- o Unable to apply strategies or complete tasks in familiar and/or new situations or to new content
- o Requires teacher guidance/direction/supervision and modified instruction most of the time
- o Requires additional time/opportunities/explanations to complete tasks

6. How will parents know if their child is performing on grade level?

Level 3 means that a student is consistently performing on grade level while Level 4 means that a student always performs at the "top" of grade-level expectations. A student might begin the year at a Level 2 or Level 1 on some sub categories of reading, writing, and mathematics; but, it is our expectation that all students will be performing at Level 3 by the end of the academic year. Teachers will also use "Not Addressed" (NA) to let parents know that a particular topic has not been addressed at that point in the year or will not be addressed.

7. Who sets the performance standards? Will they be district-wide?

The performance standards are tied to those of NC Standard Course of Study so they are not only district wide but state wide as well. For more information about the NC Standard Course of Study, you may consult your child's teacher or the DPI web site.

8. Does Level 4 equate to an "A" or a certain per cent accurate?

While there is no mathematical/numerical formula to equate Level 4 to an "A" or "% accurate", Level 4 does mean that the student consistently completes grade-level work at the highest performance expectations.

9. If my child receives all Level 4's, does that mean that my child is performing above grade level or is gifted?

Not necessarily, these performance levels measure grade-level standards and grade-level expectations. What it means is that a student is consistently completing all work at the highest level of expectation for that grade. However, we continue to believe that it is our responsibility to challenge all students to meet their full potential and that we must differentiate instruction as well as content and processes to meet individual needs.

10. Are students with disabilities (SWD) held to "grade-level" standards on the Report card?

Yes. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) federal legislation require each state, school district, and school to hold ALL students to grade-level standards. IDEA also dictates that SWD must be taught the grade-level curriculum. Modifications are made in the delivery of the content, not in the content itself. Exceptional Children's Program teachers will report student's progress based on Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals separately from the Report Card.

11. Will teachers still "give" numerical grades?

In the normal course of collecting evidence related to student progress, teachers will use a variety of methods to provide feedback to students. Some teachers will still give students numerical or letter grades on some of the work students complete. They may also give "happy faces" or some other mark to indicate that students met expectations. Teachers will also use pre-determined scoring guides to measure student performance. In addition, teachers and students will negotiate performance rubrics before beginning some tasks especially projects.

12. Why are there no descriptors for science and social studies?

While we intend to develop descriptors for science and social studies in the future, right now we focused on the two areas in the K-5 arena that form the basis for student success in all disciplines—reading/writing and mathematics.

13. Will there still be an honor roll? A principal's list?

There can still be rewards for academic performance. Not all schools currently have honor rolls or principal's lists but schools can create methods for rewarding academic and other performance.

14. How will parents receive the Report Cards?

Teachers will complete paper Report Cards which will be sent to parents/guardians in a manila envelope. Parents/Guardians will keep the Report Card and sign the manila envelope at the appropriate line and return ONLY the manila envelope to the teacher.

15. What can parents do if they do not understand the changes to the Report Card?

Parents can ask for a conference with their child's teacher or they can talk with the school Principal or Director of Elementary Instruction for more detailed information.